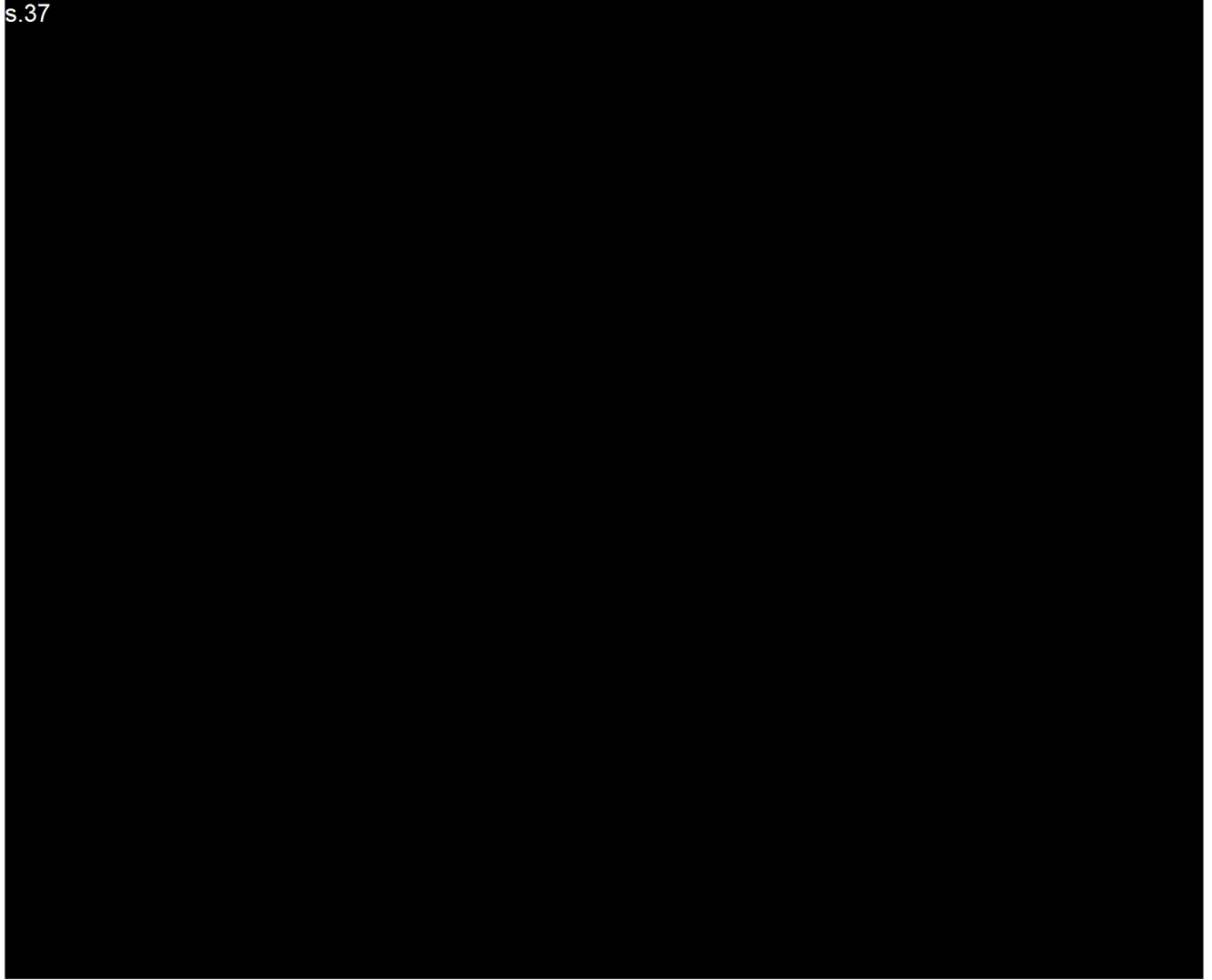


Deputy Ministers' Operations Committee (DMOC)

17 February 2022

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UNITED STATES

1. **Media Coverage *Emergencies Act*:** US and Int'l Media (eg. Bild, El Pais, Le Monde, The Independent) coverage overnight and today is focused on Canada's decision to invoke *The Emergencies Act* to address the ongoing illegal blockades and the RCMP arrests in Alberta. US headlines match coverage depending on liberal or conservative viewpoint. Last evening, The New York Times mistakenly tweeted that the PM would temporarily suspend civil liberties - tweet was subsequently deleted following a barrage of outrage by readers. Our Media team in Washington is actively ensuring media reporting accuracy via 'detect and correct'. (See attached roll-up of media & reactions from members of Congress and Governors.)

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2. **Canada-US Engagement:**

- US Deputy Secretary Wendy Sherman, in a call to USS this am, welcomed the resumption of traffic on the Ambassador Bridge.
- Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer issued a statement welcoming the reopening of the Ambassador bridge, highlighting the costs and disruptions and sating that: “It’s important to ensure that this does not happen again.” (attached)
- South Dakota Governor decried the “dishonesty” of media “supporting leaders like Trudeau”. (see below)
- Minister Joly’s call to Secretary Blinken now planned for Wednesday.
- Minister Alghabra scheduled to engage with Amb.Cohen today.

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4. **Minneapolis (Feb 14):** General Mills (food company) reached out to MNPLS/IBD to note they were seeing supply chain disruptions resulting from the blockades at the Emerson and Coutts crossings (General Mills re-routed through Sprague, MB and North Portal, SK). On Feb. 10, South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem appeared on Sean Hannity’s Fox News show. [The Governor later tweeted](#) a link to the video of her appearance, complaining about “the media...supporting leaders like Trudeau and others taking away people’s personal freedoms...”

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5. **New York (Feb. 15):** CNGNY/PRMNY have been the target of several protests over the past two weeks, with The New York Freedom Rally repeatedly marching outside the Chancery to protest COVID-19 mask and vaccine mandates in solidarity with protests/marches being held across Canada. The protests have generated limited turnout and remained peaceful. NY Gov. Kathy Hochul (D) tweeted: "My team is monitoring the Canadian truck protest situation on New York's northern border. We have convened an interagency command center to ensure we are prepared for any impacts to New Yorkers."
6. **Detroit (Feb. 14):** The Ambassador Bridge reopened to traffic after a nearly 7-day closure brought about by a group of protesters at the foot of the bridge in Windsor. Upon reopening, Michigan Governor Whitmer issued a press release (attached), her third on the matter. DTROT territory interlocutors uniformly expressed support for Canadian democratic principles of the right to associate and freedom of speech. However, their main message was an urgent economic need to reopen the border. Several officials and industry groups issued press releases and social media posts to express this goal; some called for bringing manufacturing "back" to the United States.
7. **Chicago (Feb 14):** CHCGO continues to receive voicemail messages in support of protesters in Canada and critical of the PM & federal government. Out of approximately a dozen, one has been derogatory. In a House Freedom Caucus event on February 8, Representative Tom Tiffany (R-WI) suggested that "we" should be talking to protesters in Ottawa and asking them to come to the southern border of the U.S., where they might be "somewhat effective." On February 9, Missouri Attorney General Eric Schmitt announced that he had launched an investigation into the actions of GoFundMe "to silence the Freedom Convoy."
8. **MXICO (Feb 14):** The Mexican government's interest in the protests has been focused on the disruption at the border and potential knock-on effects to North American supply chains (no specific disruptions linked to the protests have been identified here to date). Despite fairly significant coverage in the Mexican media, there is no indication that there will be any copycat protests or movements in Mexico. The Mexican undersecretary raised the issue of the influence in Canada and Mexico of right-wing groups in the US. Most articles were fact-focused and several include a mention of comments made by President Biden about the protests.

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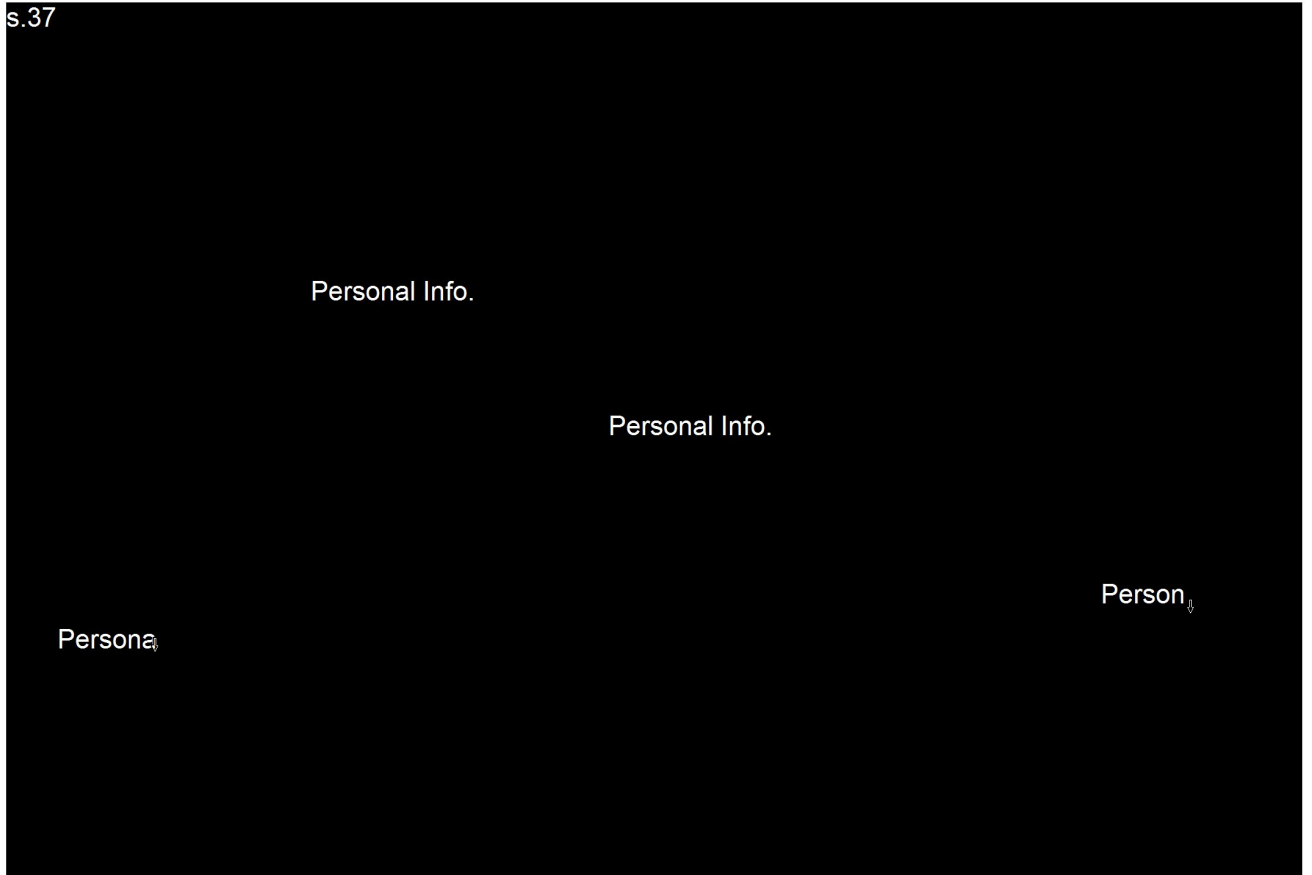
- 10. Canberra (Feb. 15):** In an echo of similar protests in Canada, the Convoy to Canberra descended upon Australia's capital in late January. With numbers increasing daily over the following weeks, hundreds of cars and trucks waving Australian flags, military insignia and campaign banners for former US president Donald Trump, took to the streets and occupied various campgrounds around the city including Exhibition Park in Canberra (EPIC), just north of the Australian Parliament. Numerous demonstrations occurred throughout the city on Saturday, including upwards of 10,000 demonstrators, including many families and children, who marched along Commonwealth Avenue, past the Canadian High Commission, on their way to Australia's Parliament House. 100+ individuals who breached barricades set up in front of Parliament House. Various arrests occurred and local media reported numerous confrontations, as well as incidents of harassment. On Sunday, AFP were present in large numbers to supervise the departure of over 10,000 individuals who camped at the EPIC site. The venue had been cleared by Monday afternoon with reports of groups relocating to smaller campgrounds on the outskirts of the city. With reduced numbers, and dispersed throughout Canberra, low level demonstrations are expected to occur in the Parliamentary area over the coming weeks, resulting in traffic disruptions. Without access to campgrounds in the vicinity of the Australia Parliament such as EPIC, the likelihood of large scale gatherings, like those witnessed on Saturday, is minimized.
- 11. Wellington (Feb. 15):** Feb. 15 marks the eighth day of protest at Parliament grounds. The occupation is thought to have a core of about 300 people, with numbers swelling to some 3,000 in the middle of the day. Both PM Ardern and Opposition leader Christopher Luxon continue to ignore the protesters and refuse to meet them. Police say their main goal for now is to clear the streets surrounding Parliament so people can move freely around the area. Few protesters appear to have taken up the option of free parking at the city's stadium. Police believe there is a "high probability" of protesters remaining at Parliament for days or weeks after central city streets have been unblocked. Victoria University's law school has been forced to close due to protesters occupying the site's car park and lawns. There have also been reports of abuse and intimidation of staff and students. Several businesses located around the parliamentary precinct remain closed for similar reasons. Groups that have been identified by mainstream media outlets as taking part include those who are anti-vaccination, anti-mandate, anti the Labour government generally (and specifically anti-Ardern), Christian fundamentalist types, gang members, Trump supporters. Former Deputy PM Winston Peters has thrown his support behind some of Parliament's protesters. Peters, whose populist NZ First party was in government when NZ imposed nationwide lockdowns and health measures in 2020, said the vaccine mandates should end immediately to allow people to return to work.

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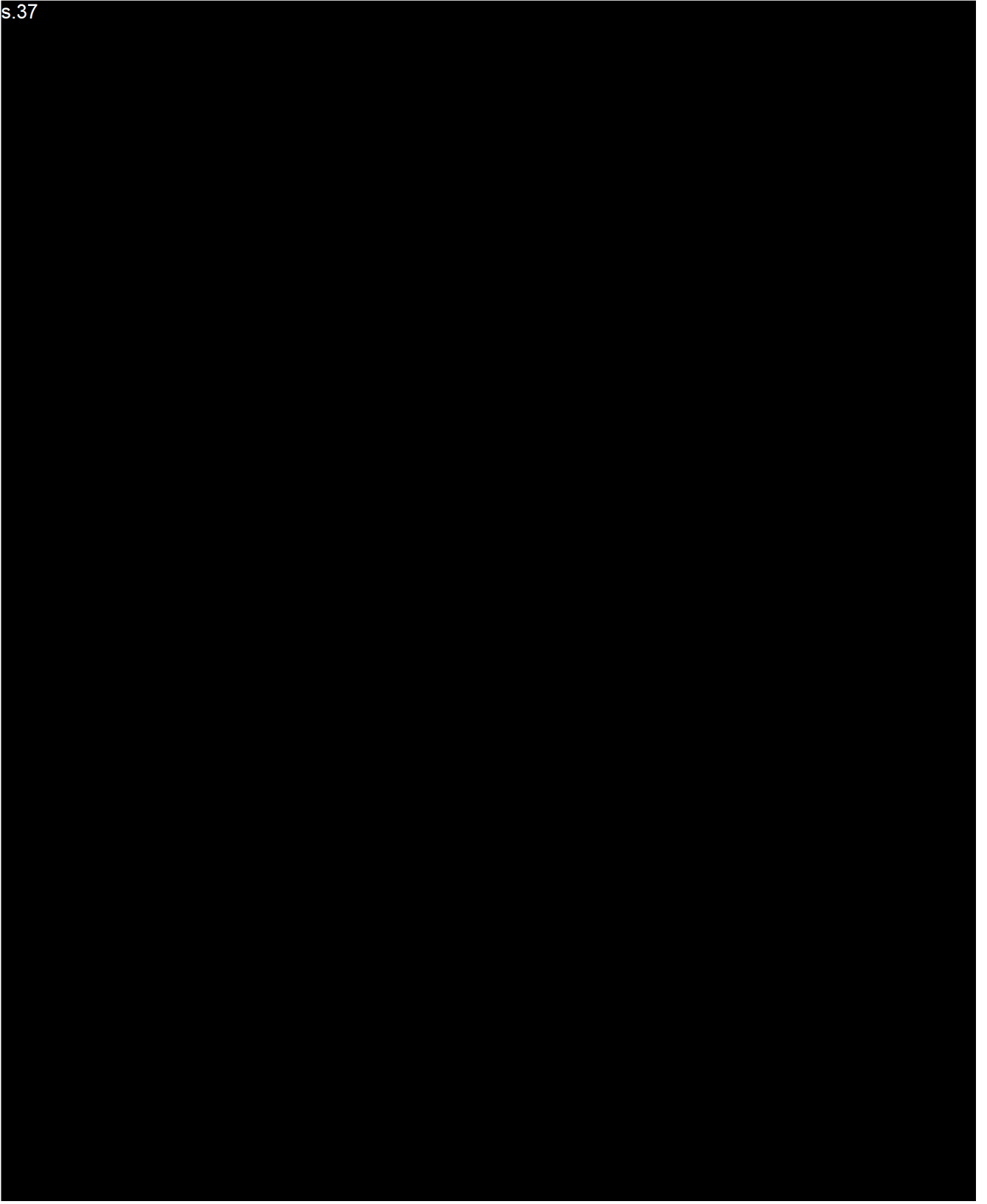
12. Canada RRM (Rapid Response Mechanism) Data Analysis (Feb 14): RRM Canada has not seen evidence of significant foreign state sponsored involvement in the online information space to date. RRM Canada notes that some foreign state media and grey media (sites with suspected links to state media) are amplifying narratives critical of the Prime Minister and the government's handling of the protest, but the majority of online content appears to derive from domestic and transnational non-state actors, including ideologically motivated (IM), conspiratorial, and COVID disinformation communities, as well as average users. Facebook has reported that some groups/pages targeting American sympathizers, including IMVE communities, were run by content mills in countries including Vietnam, Bangladesh, Romania, but there is no evidence of state affiliation and motivation could be profit.

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